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Divided Allegiance

Martinet's preface to Weinreich's *Languages in Contact* (1953)*

John E. Joseph

University of Edinburgh

1. Introduction

The publication in 1953 of *Languages in Contact: Findings and problems* by Uriel Weinreich (1926–1967) was a signal event in the study of multilingualism, individual as well as societal. The initial print run sold out by 1963, after which the book caught fire, and a further printing was needed every year or two. The time was certainly right for it in 1953, though it was by no means the first ever study of bilingualism; there was above all Werner Leopold's (1896–1983) *Speech Development of a Bilingual Child: A linguist's record*, published in four volumes between 1939 and 1949. This was patterned on still earlier studies by Maurice Grammont (1866–1946) in 1902 and Jules Ronjat (1864–1925) in 1913. Ronjat's ground-breaking book was probably the first to have *bilingual* in its title.¹ Weinreich also cites *La pensée et la polyglossie* (1915) by Izhac Epstein (1862–1943), a psychologist who, like Weinreich, was himself deeply bilingual.²

* I am grateful to Douglas A. Kibbee and Klaas Willems for helpful comments and suggestions on this paper, which is not to imply that either endorses views expressed herein

¹ It is a study of Ronjat's son, Louis (1908–1934), brought up bilingually following Grammont's principle of "one person, one language", whereby each parent always uses one single language with the child, normally the parent's mother tongue. Ronjat spoke only French to his son, while his psychoanalyst wife, *née* Ilse Loebel, spoke only German to him.

² Weinreich was born in Vilnius (Wilno) when it was part of Poland. His father Max Weinreich (1894–1969) was a leading scholar and advocate of Yiddish (see Koerner 2002: 261), although Max himself had grown up in a German-speaking family. In September 1939 Vilnius was taken over by the USSR, then the following month was given to Lithuania; but the whole of Lithuania was occupied by the USSR in August 1940. June 1941 saw Vilnius fall to the German army, and it is estimated that over the ensuing two years 95% of the city's Jewish population was murdered. Uriel was in Copenhagen with Max at the outbreak of the war, en route to the 5th International Congress of Linguists in Brussels (Kim 2011: 99). They sailed to New York in March 1940, where they were joined by Uriel's mother and younger brother. Martinet recalled that "I never tried to find out which was his stronger language, Yiddish or English. Yiddish was certainly his 'mother tongue', but does that count in the face of the language one is schooled in?" (1993: 138, my translation; original: "Je n'ai jamais cherché à savoir laquelle du yiddish et de l'anglais, était sa langue la plus sûre. Le yiddish était certainement sa 'langue maternelle', mais est-ce que cela compte en face de celle dans laquelle on fait ses classes?"). For further biographical information on Uriel, see Malkiel (1968) and King (1988); on Max, see Dawidowicz (1978).

It should not be terribly controversial to suggest that studies of societal bilingualism and multilingualism have reflected, or even been shaped by, the political views or agenda of those conducting them, though some studies have undoubtedly been undertaken on a politically neutral basis. On the other hand, a similar claim about accounts of *individual* bilingualism and multilingualism, including accounts focussed on their cognitive dimension rather than solely on the attitudes or indexicalities of those studied, or their code-switching or their associated identities, would meet with resistance. Such a claim would straddle the fault line dividing those who believe their scientific method makes them immune to any political-cultural influence, from those who worry that we can never be sure this is so. The latter group breaks down further into those who would not admit to such worries; those who admit to them and carry on regardless; and those who think that we had better explore those worries if we hope to surmount them.

This paper is aimed at the third group. It examines the evidence for the potentially controversial claim I wish to advance: that the treatment of both societal and individual bilingualism, including the latter's cognitive dimension, has reflected or even been shaped by political considerations — both national and academic — in Weinreich (1953), and particularly in the Preface contributed to it by Weinreich's Columbia University Ph.D. supervisor, André Martinet (1908–1999). Much of this evidence is located in Martinet's 'style', which is itself bilingual between French and English.

2. Bilingualism

The word 'bilingual' is first attested in English in 1824, referring to a dictionary, and is applied to inscriptions a few times in the 1840s, and once in 1862 to the Channel Islands: "a constitution of bilingual islands". The first use of *bilingual* I have found referring to a person is from an Edinburgh University Professor of Greek, John Stuart Blackie (1809–1895): "every Roman, in fact, was either bilingual or a boor" (Blackie 1868: 26). In the 1880s it became commonplace to refer to Wales and the Welsh as "bilingual" in tracts calling for religious disestablishment and devolution of the control of education there; but when these tracts said that the Welsh population was bilingual, they meant that the Welsh population was virtually *monolingual* in Welsh, with a small elite that spoke English either bi- or monolingually. Otherwise there would not have been such a problem with religion and education.

In the USA, the one other person publishing research on bilingualism when Weinreich began his work was Einar Haugen (1906–1994) of the University of Wisconsin, notably in two articles of 1950. Haugen (1950a) has "bilingualism" in its title;

Haugen (1950b) does not, but opens with the word. This was not a topic being pursued by the erstwhile students of Sapir and Bloomfield, who saw their business as being to analyse languages, not speakers. In Europe, too, bilingualism seemed to inhabit a foggy realm of psycholinguistics that linguists entered at their peril, again for reasons of professional identity: they would be asked, as many of us are who take on non-mainstream topics, whether what they did was really linguistics, a question fraught with threats of institutional marginalisation.³

3. Weinreich and Columbia University

Weinreich had the good fortune to enter Columbia University soon after its linguistics programme had been shaped by the broadest-minded linguist of the 20th century, Roman Jakobson (1896–1982). He had brought in a range of people ready to imagine new ways of approaching the understanding of language, such as Joseph Greenberg (1915–2001), with a background in anthropology, and Martinet, who from July 1940 to October 1941 had been interned in Oflag (Offizier-Lager) 5a, a prison camp for military officers at Weinsberg, Germany, where he used the opportunity to engage in close study of the dialect phonologies of fellow officers from different regions of France. Just after the war's end he published *La prononciation du français contemporain* (Martinet 1945), a rich book with an important place in the history of sociolinguistics both in France and in the USA, where he was recruited in 1946 to be head of the International Auxiliary Language Association in New York.⁴ A year later Jakobson hired Martinet to join the Columbia faculty, where he stayed until returning to Paris in 1955.

Jakobson, who had known Weinreich since they were both refugees in Copenhagen in 1939, became the “first teacher to influence him decisively at Columbia” (Malkiel 1968: 128). In 1949 Weinreich published *College Yiddish*, which became a highly successful textbook, and Jakobson contributed the preface. That same year, Jakobson left Columbia for Harvard, and Weinreich received a funding grant allowing him to set off for Switzerland to do dialect research for what would be his Ph.D. thesis of 1951, *Research Problems in Bilingualism with Special Reference to Switzerland*. Martinet, who by this time was somewhat estranged from Jakobson, directed the the-

³ Psychological studies of bilingualism have mainly focussed on problems experienced by bilingual children, whether cognitive or social in nature. The idea of a ‘bilingual advantage’ in cognitive development was slow in emerging; the early studies by linguists were ahead of their time in implying it (see e.g. Bialystok, Craik & Luk 2012).

⁴ On the history of the IALA, with which many prominent linguists were involved, see Falk (2002).

sis. In between *College Yiddish* and his departure for Switzerland, Weinreich received a grant from the National Science Foundation to prepare the *Language and Culture Atlas of Ashkenazic Jewry* (Herzog et al. eds. 1994–2000), begun in 1950 and still continuing half a century after Weinreich’s death from cancer, aged 40. His doctoral thesis was not published until 2011, but from it he distilled the much shorter book that he published in 1953 as *Languages in Contact*, which was the title of a course at Columbia given by Martinet.

4. Martinet on the “useful assumption” of autarky

Martinet’s Preface to *Languages in Contact* begins like a fairy tale: Once upon a time, though in a word-for-word translation of the equivalent French phrase, *Il était une fois*.

There was a time when the progress of research required that each community should be considered linguistically self-contained and homogeneous. (p. vii)

When was that time? If asked to locate its apogee, we might well place it around 1953, rather than in some distant past as Martinet implies.⁵ Actually we might locate it in 1965, with Chomsky’s declaration that the object of linguistics is to discover the knowledge of “an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly” (Chomsky 1965: 3, on which see Weinreich, Labov & Herzog 1968: 125). And if we drew up a list of linguists of the mid-20th century whose work treated the language system as self-contained and homogeneous, it is not obvious that Martinet’s own name would be missing.

If Martinet is thinking back for instance to Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), he could have considered the citation of Ronjat (1913) in Weinreich’s bibliography. Ronjat taught in Saussure’s own faculty, and published his study of bilingualism the year Saussure died, three years before the *Cours de linguistique générale* appeared — so even in *that* time and place the “requirement” for conceiving of communities as linguistically self-contained and homogeneous was limited.⁶ Indeed the *Cours* itself includes a section on “intercourse” in which it is clear that communities are *never* lin-

⁵ Weinreich, Labov & Herzog (1968) opens with a long section (pp. 98–125) tracing assumptions of homogeneity and self-containedness back to Hermann Paul (1864–1941) and Saussure.

⁶ Bally and Sechehaye sought Ronjat’s advice on the inclusion of material in Saussure (1916; see Joseph 2012a: 449–450) and he was one of the first they asked to read the completed manuscript (Chambon & Fryba-Reber 1995–96: 9). Ronjat would later advise Bally and Gautier on the selection of items to include in Saussure (1922). Incidentally, Martinet’s lectures at Columbia would inspire one of his students, Wade Baskin, to undertake his 1959 English translation of Saussure (1916).

guistically homogeneous, even if a language system is (Saussure 1922 [1916]: 281-285).

Martinet then writes:

Whether this autarcic [*sic*] situation was believed to be a fact or was conceived of as a working hypothesis need not detain us here. It certainly was a useful assumption.
(p. vii)

Autarkic is a political and economic term, meaning self-sufficient, not requiring external aid. English dictionaries spell it with a *k* rather than a *c*;⁷ Martinet's *autarcic* is a hybrid of the English and French (*autarcique*), with probably unintended ironic effect: the fact that the variant spelling was printed and does not impede comprehension tends to contradict what he is saying about homogeneity. In the early 1950s autarky was associated with communism, specifically Stalinism. Marxism had been a resolutely internationalist movement until, following the death of Lenin in 1924, Stalin began to articulate the principle of "Socialism in One Country" that would set the USSR on the path of autarky. This opened the breach with Trotsky and his followers, who remained committed to international revolution. In the 1930s, Nazi Germany too would adopt autarky as its principle.

Stalin's death on 5 March 1953 may have helped it to seem like common sense that autarkic thinking was a thing of the past. I shall return to this; but Martinet's point here is that it was useful for a time for linguists to dwell in a fiction that abstracted away the reality of "actual complexities" in order to achieve "some rigor".

By making investigators blind to a large number of actual complexities, it has enabled scholars, from the founding fathers of our science down to the functionalists and structuralists of today, to abstract a number of fundamental problems, to present for them solutions perfectly valid in the frame of the hypothesis, and generally to achieve, perhaps for the first time, some rigor in a research [*sic*] involving man's psychic activity.

Linguists will always have to revert at times to this pragmatic assumption. (p. vii)

In calling this an assumption to which linguists will "always [...] at times" (a seeming contradiction) have to *revert*, he makes clear that he sees it as belonging to the past essentially, but not entirely or exclusively. Why does he make this point? The reason

⁷ It should not be confused with *autarchic* (French *autarchique*) based on a different Greek root and meaning self-governing. Given the phonological difference between French *autarcique* and *autarchique*, Martinet would not likely have confused the two; in any case, their meanings largely overlap.

may be that his own diachronic phonological work is based on this same ‘pragmatic assumption’. His explanations of the “economy of language change” based on phonological space and functional load are ‘blind’ to the ‘complexities’ of how individuals vary, why not all actuated changes become embedded (in the terminology of Weinreich et al. 1968) or how a language system continues to function during the transition period of changes. From Martinet’s perspective, his functionalism differs from Jakobson’s or Hjelmslev’s structuralism, Bloomfieldian distributionalism and above all Chomskyan generativism through its insistence on phonetic and other linguistic details that those less positivistic approaches want to abstract away.

In my review of his memoirs some years back I commented on “Martinet’s vision of himself as a besieged knight in question of ‘realism’”, adding that

For Jakobson, functionalism (insofar as he adhered to the term) would itself become a quasi-metaphysical force, shaping all the languages of the world in the same direction, giving them a unity that itself defined the essence of language. To Martinet, on the other hand, functionalism suggested everything that was *not* universal, the *hic et nunc* exigencies of particular speech situations varying from place to place, time to time, person to person, and dependent on no underlying unity. Language adapts to each such situation and function, in order to fill it in the most economical way possible.

[...] Yet many linguists who respect Martinet’s work nevertheless do not adopt his approach precisely because economy *itself* has assumed quasi-metaphysical dimensions within it. If economy is an end to which all natural processes and human actions are striving, is it not ultimately the same kind of universal force Martinet so vehemently rejects? Clearly, to Martinet there is all the difference in the world. (Joseph 1994: 214-215)

Despite all the attention he gave to dialect differences, his analyses show how he too “has to revert to [...] this pragmatic assumption” that after 20 years he can hardly disown, even though the context of his Preface to Weinreich’s book requires him to give a strong justification for work that appears to be at cross purposes with it.

5. Martinet’s metaphors

The second paragraph continues:

But we shall now have to stress the fact that a linguistic community is *never* homogeneous and hardly ever self-contained. Dialectologists have pointed to the permeability of linguistic cells, and linguistic changes have been shown to spread like waves through space. (p. vii; italics in original)

Martinet here implies that homogeneity and self-containedness do not go hand-in-hand. Most cases exhibit neither, but self-contained linguistic communities are possible, homogeneous ones not. This new outlook, the one that informs the work of his student Weinreich, is given legitimation through Martinet's subtle linking of it to the 'hard' sciences of biology (the permeability of cells) and physics (spreading like waves through space). This is quite some rhetorical ploy, given that the general academic consensus has been to accord less hard-science status to the study of social phenomena than to individuals.

Martinet's next step is to argue that the division between the two is in fact illusory:

But it remains to be emphasized that linguistic diversity begins next door, nay, at home and within one and the same man. It is not enough to point out that each individual is a battle-field for conflicting linguistic types and habits, and, at the same time, a permanent source of linguistic interference. What we heedlessly and somewhat rashly call 'a language' is the aggregate of millions of such microcosms many of which evince such aberrant linguistic comportment that the question arises whether they should not be grouped into other 'languages'. (p. vii)

Battle-field: the war metaphor slips in almost unnoticed, being about conflict not between communities, but within each individual. The term "interference" implies the presence in each person of distinct phonological, grammatical or lexical systems which are at war, and it is implied that this is as true of people whom Martinet will shortly call "unilinguals" as of multilinguals.⁸ More precisely, if "each individual is a battle-field for conflicting linguistic types and habits", this means that there are actually no unilinguals, except as abstractions.

The battle discourse also acts as a sleight of hand for Martinet's shift into the jargon of behaviourism: habits, comportment, responses. "Aberrant comportment" implies the existence of 'normal' behaviour, which seems at odds with the overall message.⁹ The quasi-behaviourist discourse continues:

What further complicates the picture, and may, at the same time, contribute to clarify it, is the feeling of linguistic allegiance which will largely determine the responses of

⁸ On the Prague School origins of "interference", see Andrews (1999: 144-148).

⁹ "Comportment" may be a slight Gallicism, but the implications of "aberrant" do not differ between French and English. Martinet's writing style involves an odd mixture of certain words chosen carefully for rhetorical effect and others that he seems to have landed upon "heedlessly and somewhat rashly".

every individual. This, even more than sheer intercourse, is the cement that holds each one of our ‘languages’ together: It is different allegiance which makes two separate languages of Czech and Slovak more than the actual material differences between the two literary languages.

One might be tempted to define bilingualism as divided linguistic allegiance. (p. vii)

Describing everyone’s “responses” as being *determined* is a very strong form of behaviourism indeed, though Martinet calls what determines them not a stimulus but a “feeling”. A feeling of “linguistic allegiance” – and what is that? Dictionaries define allegiance as a duty of fidelity to a state or sovereign. It can also be to a religion or nation, as in Martinet’s example of Czech and Slovak, which were languages of a single state at the time. Martinet is using the metaphor of allegiance in connection with what makes a language, given the reality of linguistic heterogeneity, but he is slipping rather facilely from community to individual.¹⁰

Anyone familiar with Martinet’s work should be well aware of his penchant for turning metaphors into theoretical constructs, especially concrete ones, such as the push-chains and drag-chains and empty slots of his phonological theory (see Martinet 1955). He slips them in as metaphors but, before you know it, he is treating them as real mechanisms and processes (see Joseph 1989) – and in much the same way we now see him change “allegiances” from “what makes two separate languages” into a definition of bilingualism. More sleight of hand: “*One might be tempted to define bilingualism as divided linguistic allegiance*” (my italics) – after which the reader expects a “but”, and an explanation for why Martinet resists the temptation. Not at all: the next sentence turns divided allegiance into a fact about bilingualism, *en passant*, as he tells us how it strikes “the unilingual person”:

Divided allegiance is what strikes the unilingual person as startling, abnormal, almost uncanny in bilingualism. (p. vii)

Martinet does not say how he claims to know this, nor does he give any indication that unilingual persons might not all feel the same way. Even so, this sentence seems like a step back from the preceding one. There he tentatively *defined* bilingualism as divided allegiance, whereas here he is merely talking about how divided allegiance strikes

¹⁰ He could usefully have made a reference at this point to Kloss (1952), which figures in Weinreich’s bibliography along with other work of the 1920s and 1930s by Heinz Kloss (1904–1987), on whom see Hutton (1999).

unilinguals, a seemingly weaker claim. But is there not a contradiction vis-à-vis what the preceding paragraph said about how “each individual is a battle-field for conflicting linguistic types and habits [and] a permanent source of linguistic interference”? Each individual is a battle-field, within the context of a single language, so not excluding unilinguals. Why then would the unilingual find bilingualism so startling, abnormal, almost uncanny? Martinet’s effort to put clear blue water between bilinguals and unilinguals, based on a divided allegiance that the former necessarily feel, and that the latter never feel but find incomprehensible, is undercut by his use of the overly powerful metaphor of the battlefield to describe the linguistic experience of both.

Martinet acknowledges the problem:

Yet the concept of linguistic allegiance is too vague to be of any help in deciding, in doubtful cases, whether or not we should diagnose a bilingual situation. [...] The clash, in the same individual, of two languages of comparable social and cultural value, both spoken by millions of cultured unilinguals, may be psychologically most spectacular, but unless we have to do with a literary genius, the permanent linguistic traces of such a clash will be nil. [...] Linguistic allegiance is a fact, an important fact, but we should not let it decide when language contact begins. (pp. vii-viii)

Again Martinet’s rhetoric of a “spectacular clash” only hinders his argumentative coherence, and it is hard to see why a clash should be psychologically most spectacular yet leave no linguistic traces. Martinet also slips in the inference that bilingualism is about “two languages of comparable social and cultural value”, which is the exception rather than the rule in language contact. He is caught between asserting the importance of Weinreich’s book, on the grounds that its findings apply to everyone at a deep psychological level, and yet maintaining that only an expert in linguistics can properly analyse it. In the last sentence above, if linguistic allegiance should not decide when language contact begins, then who should? The answer will come at the very end of the Preface:

We needed a detailed survey of all the problems involved in and connected with bilingualism by a scholar well informed of current linguistic trends and with a wide personal experience of bilingual situations. Here it is. (p. ix)

We should let Uriel Weinreich, not linguistic allegiance, “decide when language contact begins”. In a sense this is obvious: linguistic allegiance is after all a concept, a

metaphorical concept. It is supportable by evidence, but that does not make it a “fact”, though Martinet calls it one. How could one concept decide where another concept begins? On the other hand, if allegiance is what makes a language, or makes two languages where structurally the linguist sees one, how can it *not* decide when language contact begins?

This is, I think, another rhetorical trick. Of course *we* want to decide where language contact begins, not leave that to some “feeling” that speakers cannot even articulate. But the concept of linguistic allegiance is already something metaphorical that *we* have imagined, as linguists, and we have imagined it in a way that already is bound up with where language contact, another of our imagined concepts, begins. So it is circular. But rather than admit this, Martinet leads us to suppose that the “fact” of linguistic allegiance can fool us into deciding where language contact begins and ends, and that we must resist this.

6. The political atmosphere

We have meanwhile shifted away from “divided” allegiance, which strikes the unilingual as so uncanny, but which is virtually a definition of the bilingual’s condition. The sole example Martinet gives of a bilingual individual is of one who shifts from English to Russian. Maybe it was a random choice. But maybe not, if we look at what was going on at Columbia University at just this time. According to an article in the *Columbia Spectator* of 8 April 1953, the Dean of Students announced the policy that “All significant information is given to government investigators in loyalty investigations of Columbia College students or graduates” being conducted by the McCarthy Senate Committee.¹¹ In March “the McCarthy Senate investigating committee [had] subpoenaed the records [of] a Columbia College graduate working for the Voice of America” – and that would likely have been a graduate of Martinet’s department. “The question posed by loyalty probers according to the Dean is mostly worded in the form, ‘Do you have any reason to question his loyalty, and if so why?’”. Loyalty – allegiance; and when we get into Weinreich’s text, the term he uses is in fact “language loyalty” (p. 99).

Asked by a reporter “whether or not he would mention that a graduate was a member of the Young Marxist League, no longer active on the Columbia campus”,

¹¹ See <http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/columbia.html> (accessed 23 Sep. 2017). For broader perspectives on the history of concerns about the dangers of bilingual education, including the worry that young children taught foreign languages might be indoctrinated with foreign ideas, see, in the American context, Kibbee (2016), and in that of mid-19th century Geneva, Joseph (2012b).

the Dean said that “it would depend upon the individual case”, but that “We would not cover up any information which we believed to be of significance”. According to Schrecker (1994), in 1952–54 nearly 100 academics were dismissed by universities for subversive activities, usually past or present membership in the Communist Party, and hundreds more were coerced into resigning. In 1949 the prominent linguist and anthropologist Morris Swadesh (1909–1967), a disciple of Sapir, was fired from the City College of New York for his communist allegiances.¹² It is unclear whether Roman Jakobson’s move from Columbia to Harvard that same year may have been motivated in part by the less harsh political climate there; but Jakobson’s papers in the MIT Library include a letter from the President of Columbia University, Dwight D. Eisenhower, defending him against an accusation of having Communist sympathies. That same year, Jakobson wrote the Preface to Uriel Weinreich’s *College Yiddish*. Jakobson was, of course, a native speaker of Russian: divided allegiance, indeed.

But then, what had brought Martinet to America in 1945 was a questioning of *his* allegiance. In France at that time a purge was undertaken of people who had been identified as collaborators. His memoirs explain quite openly how his release from Oflag 5a in October 1941 was made possible by his wife’s agreeing to work in the German bookshop in the Place de la Sorbonne, commenting:

I was freed under somewhat dubious conditions, in other words for no generally good reason. The Germans responsible for freeing me no doubt thought that my wife, and in turn I myself, were collaborators. But I have to admit that nothing was ever imposed on me. [...] I restarted my teaching at the École des Hautes Études, but in an atmosphere of suspicion on my colleagues’ part.

After the Liberation, I was denounced as a collaborator by Marcel Cohen. [...] Mario Roques asked me, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, provisionally to stop my teaching at the Hautes Études. (Martinet 1993: 51)¹³

¹² According to Martinet, “It’s true: he was doing politics in his lectures, he was preaching communism. Then the City College communists denounced him; they were afraid of this causing a terrible drama” (Chevalier & Encrevé 2006: 58; original: “C’est vrai: il faisait de la politique dans sa chaire, il prêchait le communisme. Alors les communistes de City College l’ont dénoncé; ils avaient peur que ça fasse un drame terrible”).

¹³ My translation. Original: “J’ai donc été libéré dans des conditions un peu douteuses, c’est-à-dire pour aucune raison généralement valable. Les Allemands responsables de cette libération ont sans doute estimé que ma femme, et moi-même à la suite, faisions parties des collaborateurs. Mais je dois reconnaître qu’on ne m’a jamais rien imposé. [...] J’ai repris mon enseignement à l’École des hautes études, mais dans un atmosphère de suspicion de la part de mes collègues. / Après la Libération, j’ai été dénoncé comme collaborateur par Marcel Cohen. [...] Mario Roques m’a demandé, afin d’éviter tous remous, de cesser provisoirement mon enseignement aux Hautes Études.” On Marcel Cohen (1884–1974) and Mario Roques (1875–1961), see Chevalier & Encrevé (2006).

In October 1945 he recommenced his teaching at the École des Hautes Études, but his wartime ‘divided allegiance’ remained suspect, and no doubt played its part in his being passed over for the one post in linguistics in the Sorbonne, vacated with the retirement of Joseph Vendryès (1875–1960), in favour of the less well-known Indo-Europeanist Michel Lejeune (1907–2000).¹⁴ The following summer he accepted the invitation to be director of research at the IALA that took him to New York. In 1953 he was therefore well placed to sympathise with those Columbia students, graduates and colleagues, from his department and others, who were undergoing a similar purge.

And, again, professionally, he has a divided allegiance: as Martinet the phonologist, pushing the ‘autarkic’ vision of language to its extreme limits; and as Martinet the proto-sociolinguist and champion of Weinreich, pushing that ‘pragmatic assumption’ into the past and saying that linguists will always have to revert to it, while in the same breath declaring it false. This Preface is truly divided allegiance at work.

7. Weinreich on interference and language loyalty

Looking at Weinreich’s Table of Contents, we see that the key concept, which occurs over and over, is *interference*. When we finally get to language loyalty, even it is presented “as a reaction to interference” (99). But the whole concept of interference implies that autarky is the normal, good condition. Interference is not a good thing: it incurs a penalty in American football; it was a problem for people trying out their new television sets in 1953; and it was the last thing any Loyal American wanted foreigners doing in the government. Its prominence here shows that Weinreich shared Martinet’s divided allegiance to classical structural analysis and the real cognitive and social condition of multilingualism.

Alternatively, he may have had it imposed on him by his mentor; but Weinreich’s later work suggests that he did share it, and even transmitted it to his student William Labov, whose structuralist inclinations have long been noted, and frequently puzzled over by anthropologically-inclined sociolinguists from William Bright (1928–2006) and Dell Hymes (1927–2009) through to Figueroa (1994).¹⁵ Labov (1963), his first significant published article, takes a more modern constructivist, indexicalist approach to linguistic identity than does the slightly later variationist work that made his reputa-

¹⁴ See Chevalier & Encrevé (2006: 33), who say that this refusal “wounded” (“blessé”) Martinet. This seems borne out by his glossing over the event in his memoirs.

¹⁵ The attempt to reconcile the tenets of structural analysis with the reality of variation in synchronic and diachronic linguistics are at the heart respectively of Weinreich (1954) and Weinreich et al. (1968).

tion, and that is less concerned with individuals and their beliefs and motives than with an objective observation of social classes and related divisions.¹⁶ It got attention, but was not seen by the structuralist linguistics establishment as game-changing. Labov, determined to change the game, saw that to do this required divided allegiance: he needed to speak to the linguistic ‘autarkists’ in their language, not challenging the ‘homeogeneity’ of English so much as positing ‘little Englishes’ belonging to different classes that each had their own homogeneity and autarky.

I do not mean to suggest it was inevitable that, in the paranoid atmosphere of Columbia University in 1953, where people still licking the wounds of WWII were being persecuted for present or past political allegiances, the theoretical conception of bilingualism would be one of divided allegiance and interference, implying the autonomy of different language systems. Rather, when people’s lives were dominated every day by questions of allegiance and loyalty on which their careers and identities depended, it is natural to think in such terms and to consider them as ‘common sense’. Common sense is the most ideologically vulnerable aspect of anyone’s thinking, precisely because it is assumed to be ‘natural’, logical, reflecting the way the world is, when in truth it can be nothing more than one way of conceiving the world. In 1963, the paranoia had abated. Indeed, after the *détente* of the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, Americans and others breathed a great sigh of relief: Khrushchev had backed down from the brink of nuclear war, showing that, despite his sometimes clownish behaviour and erratic sabre-rattling, he was ultimately rational. What intrigues me is why reviewers of *Languages in Contact* (such as Barker 1954, Greenberg 1955, Haugen 1954, Piroch 1955, Pulgram 1953, and from outside the USA, Lüdtke 1953, Ullmann 1954), did not remark on what now looks like its highly determined coding and counter-intuitive reasoning: it seemed like common sense at the time.¹⁷

The section of *Languages in Contact* where Weinreich introduces ‘language loyalty’ reads:

¹⁶ It dealt with the English dialect of Martha’s Vineyard, an island off the coast of Massachusetts, which shows ‘Canadian raising’, in which the diphthongs in words like right and house are pronounced as /əy/ and /əw/ rather than /ay/ and /aw/. This feature is not found in the dialects of the US mainland spoken by the large numbers of people who ‘summer’ on Martha’s Vineyard, and with whom the Vineyarders (year-round residents) have a complex relationship of dependency and resentment.

¹⁷ One of these reviewers, Greenberg, was, as mentioned in §3, a member of the department in which Weinreich wrote his thesis, and is thanked by Weinreich in the Acknowledgments of *Languages in Contact* “for his helpful criticism on each part of the dissertation” (1953: x). This would account for Greenberg’s sharing in the Columbia University ‘common sense’ of the time, though from today’s perspective it raises questions about whether he was the best choice as a reviewer of the book.

The sociolinguistic study of language contact needs a term to describe the phenomenon which corresponds to language approximately as nationalism corresponds to nationality. The term LANGUAGE LOYALTY has been proposed for this purpose. A language, like a nationality, may be thought of as a set of behavior norms; language loyalty, like nationalism, would designate the state of mind in which the language (like the nationality), as an intact entity, and in contrast to other languages, assumes a high position in a scale of values, a position in need of being “defended”. (p. 99)¹⁸

It is surprising today to read that language loyalty was conceived as being to language as nationalism was to nationality. We might have expected Uriel Weinreich, who as a Jewish child escaped the Nationalist Socialist occupation of Vilnius, to think that ‘nationalism’ is a dangerous thing, but he does not appear to. He associates it with *defending* the nation, “as an intact entity”, not with purifying it; and even comments in a footnote that

In Hitlerite Germany, where the symbolic values of the German language were so fully played upon, the purists had to struggle for their cause as in the pre-Hitler years. In the Soviet Union, too, the glorification of the “great and mighty” Russian language drowns out the occasional puristic pronouncements. (p. 102n.)

A few pages earlier (p. 99 n. 53) Weinreich wrote that “Occasionally language loyalty can even be made subservient to aggressive purposes”, and refers to “grotesque attempts” from “recent European history”. And what are they?

The Russians have toyed with the idea of changing certain forms of Slavic languages in Soviet-occupied countries. For example, after invading Poland in 1939 they found the fact that ‘Jew’ was called in Polish *Żyd* distasteful, since *žid* in Russian is a term of contempt. Consequently, they ordered Polish newspapers to write *Jewrej*, coined on the model of the non-pejorative Russian *jevrej*. After World War II, the Russian occupation authorities in Poland again felt misgivings about the use of *pan* as a pronoun of polite address, since *pan* also means (in Russian as well as Polish) ‘squire’, and was found to be an inappropriate remnant of feudalism in a People’s Democracy [...]. (ibid.)

¹⁸ He does not specify where the term has been proposed. A JSTOR search has turned up no earlier example; it is not in Linton (1943), which Weinreich goes on to discuss at some length in this context.

These are bathetic examples of a phenomenon that Weinreich has declared – with Martinetian bombast – “aggressive” and “grotesque”. With the example of *Żyd* it is unclear whether the “aggressive purposes” are directed at the Polish newspapers or the Polish language; and does the Russians’ political correctness really qualify as “grotesque”, in the context of Stalin’s deportation of Jews to the Jewish Autonomous Oblast, let alone the simultaneous invasion of Poland from the west by German forces who would undertake the extermination of Polish Jews?

Something else is going on here: nation/nationalism is not just a comparison for language/language loyalty. It is a model, and not just for what Chomsky (1986) would later call E-language, but also for I-language, the cognitive dimension. The bilingual brain is being conceived by Martinet and Weinreich on the model of a nation, or perhaps two nations within a single state. Many of the metaphors point to this: autarky, battlefields, loyalty and, above all, that strange stab at defining bilingualism as divided allegiance.

8. Conclusion

Read outside its immediate historical context, *Languages in Contact*, most particularly its Preface by Martinet, contains statements that can seem contradictory and mystifying. The motives behind them become clearer when we consider the febrile atmosphere at Columbia University when Weinreich and Martinet were writing, as “loyalty investigations” were being implemented by the Dean of Students to root out suspected communists — people thought to have allegiances divided between the two sides of the Iron Curtain. At the same time, Weinreich’s thesis was challenging fundamental assumptions of linguistics concerning what Martinet called the autarky of language systems, their being “linguistically self-contained and homogeneous”. In terms of professional identity, Weinreich was liable to a charge of divided allegiances, between the doctrines maintained by linguists (including Martinet in his own work) and a sociologically oriented approach that risked having him be marginalised as a heretic. Malkiel (1968: 129) underscores the impact of Jakob Jud (1882–1952) and other “Swiss practitioners of minute, almost microscopic, dialect investigation” had on Weinreich, and how sharply it contrasted with “what he had absorbed on his academic home ground in Morningside Heights as a student of general linguistics”.¹⁹

¹⁹ Yakov Malkiel (1914–1998) may have had his own agenda in a necrology that includes this and the remarks quoted earlier about Jakobson’s influence on Weinreich, while saying nothing to indicate that Martinet had any input into his thinking. Not surprisingly, Martinet (1993: 66) saw things differently:

If it was indeed the aim of Martinet's Preface to have shielded Weinreich from such a charge, it may have succeeded, since the linguistics establishment did not shun him — only ignored him — and the door was opened to more such work that would gradually become accepted into the mainstream (notably Ferguson 1959). By the late 1960s, sociolinguistics was achieving real prominence, led by Weinreich's student Labov among others. The charges of divided national allegiance found a new lightning rod, thanks to the anti-war activities of Chomsky, but the professional loyalties of sociolinguists remain suspect to self-styled 'real' linguists, as the field continues to play out the attempted purification into Nature and Subject/Society poles that Latour (1991) has identified as the distinctive yet forlorn impulse of modern thought (see Joseph 2014 and in press).²⁰

"I think it was Jakobson who drew him to Columbia. But since Jakobson was Professor of Russian and I of General Linguistics, it's at my door that Uriel landed" ("Je pense que c'est Jakobson qui l'avait attiré à Columbia. Mais comme Jakobson était professeur de russe et moi de linguistique générale, c'est chez moi que Uriel a débarqué"). Indeed, Martinet's "Languages in Contact" course can hardly have failed to help shape Weinreich's best-known work, even if Martinet (ibid.) perhaps exaggerates in claiming that "He and I together worked out his thesis, which I fashioned, so to speak, as well as programming his stay in Switzerland where he collected his data" ("C'est ensemble que nous avons mis au point une thèse que j'ai pour ainsi dire façonnée, et programmé son séjour en Suisse où il a recueilli ses données"). Along with the other levels of coded meaning in Martinet's Preface, an implicit caution against divided allegiances to one's supervisor and other senior scholars is not beyond imagining.

²⁰ As it happens, Martinet attributed tension between himself and Weinreich to their disagreement over the value of Chomsky's work. When they were co-editing the journal *Word* in 1954, Chomsky submitted an article that Weinreich was keen to accept, but had to bow to the senior editor Martinet's decision to reject. Martinet describes the event in language that is telling in the present context: "Weinreich had the impression that he could venture into syntax and semantics without being unfaithful to me. Decidedly, he was seduced, and I recall a saying of his that was reported to me: 'The light in linguistics is coming from MIT'" (Martinet 1993: 68, my translation; original: "Weinreich avait l'impression qu'il pouvait s'aventurer en syntaxe et en sémantique sans m'être infidèle. Incontestablement, il était séduit, et je me rappelle une formule de lui qu'on m'a rapporté: 'La lumière en linguistique vient du MIT'"). Martinet's great fondness and admiration for Weinreich, with whom he remained on good terms, is evident throughout his memoirs, which put their differences down to Weinreich's Jewishness; the book's anti-Semitism has been much discussed, including in Joseph (1994).

In a 1988 interview Martinet made clear that he saw Chomsky as Jakobson's creature, and thought that both Chomsky and Martinet himself faced hostility from the American students of Sapir and Bloomfield who associated them with Jakobson, whom they regarded as an overly ambitious interloper (see Dixon 2007). "People are binary, and not only Jakobson. They told themselves: Americans, and then the others. Well, the others, that was Jakobson, who was the godfather of transformationalism" (Chevalier & Encrevé 2006: 59; original: "Les gens sont binaires, et non seulement Jakobson. Ils se sont dit: les Américains et puis les autres. Or, les autres, c'était Jakobson qui était le parrain du transformationnisme"). Complaints about Jakobson's binarism, a steady refrain in Martinet's reminiscences, make for an odd counterpoint with the binary way in which Martinet characterises his differences with Jakobson and others.

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SUMMARY

Read outside its immediate historical context, *Languages in Contact* (1953) by Uriel Weinreich (1926–1967), most particularly its Preface by André Martinet (1908–1999), contains statements that can seem contradictory and mystifying. Describing his student Weinreich's book, Martinet characterises bilingualism as "divided linguistic allegiance", and uses the metaphor of a battlefield to describe the feelings of language variation experienced by bilinguals — but also by monolinguals, suggesting that the mainstream doctrine of languages as self-contained and unified is nothing more than a useful abstraction. Martinet's own allegiances were divided between loyalty to his student and to his profession, since his own best-known work tended in the direction of the abstraction. All this was taking place in a febrile atmosphere at Columbia University, as "loyalty investigations" were being implemented by the Dean of Students to root out suspected communists — people thought to have allegiances divided between the two sides of the Iron Curtain. This paper tries to make the curious statements in the Preface and the book proper comprehensible by reading them within these professional and political contexts. It considers too how Martinet and Weinreich conceive of the bilingual brain on the model of two nations within a single state.

RÉSUMÉ

Lue en dehors de son contexte historique immédiat, *Languages in Contact* (1953) d'Uriel Weinreich (1926–1967), tout particulièrement la Préface d'André Martinet (1908–1999) à, contient des affirmations qui peuvent sembler contradictoires et mystificatrices. Décrivant l'ouvrage de son étudiant, Martinet caractérise le bilinguisme comme une "allégeance linguistique partagée" et utilise la métaphore d'un champ de bataille pour décrire les sentiments de variation linguistique éprouvés par les bilingues, mais aussi les monolingues, suggérant que la doctrine dominante en matière de langues, conçues comme autonomes et unifiées, n'est rien de plus qu'une abstraction commode. Les propres allégeances de Martinet étaient partagées entre la loyauté envers son étudiant et sa profession, son ouvrage le plus connu tendant lui-même dans la direction de l'abstraction. Tout cela prenait place dans une atmosphère fébrile à l'université Columbia, alors que des "enquêtes de loyauté" étaient mises en oeuvre par le Doyen des étudiants pour extirper les personnes suspectées d'être communistes — gens présumés avoir des allégeances partagées entre les deux côtés du Rideau de fer. Cet article essaye de rendre proprement compréhensibles les curieuses déclarations de

la Préface et du livre en les lisant dans les contextes professionnel et politique de l'époque. Il examine aussi comment Martinet et Weinreich imaginent le cerveau bilingue sur le modèle de deux nations dans un seul état.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Languages in Contact (1953) von Uriel Weinreich (1926–1967) und insbesondere das Vorwort von André Martinet (1908–1999) enthalten manche widersprüchliche und verwirrende Aussagen. In der Beschreibung des Buches seines Studenten Weinreich definiert Martinet Zweisprachigkeit als “geteilte sprachliche Loyalität”. Um die Gefühle zu beschreiben, die nicht nur zweisprachige, sondern auch einsprachige Menschen angesichts von Sprachvariation empfinden, verwendet er die Metapher eines Schlachtfeldes. Damit legt er nahe, dass die gängige Lehre, als seien Sprachen in sich geschlossene und einheitliche Gebilde, nichts anderes als eine nützliche Abstraktion ist. Martinets eigene Loyalität war geteilt zwischen der Treue zu seinem Schüler und der Treue zu seinem Beruf — immerhin vertrat er in seinen bekanntesten eigenen Arbeiten die Sichtweise der Abstraktion. All dies fand in einer fiebrigen Atmosphäre an der Columbia University statt, zu einer Zeit, als der damalige Studiendekan sog. “Loyalitätsermittlungen” durchführte, um vermeintliche Kommunisten zu bekämpfen; es gab Menschen, die dachten, dass sie gegenüber den beiden Seiten des Eisernen Vorhangs loyal zu sein hatten. In diesem Beitrag wird der Versuch unternommen, die sonderbaren Aussagen im Vorwort und im Buch vor dem Hintergrund der damaligen Lage in der Linguistik und des politischen Kontextes der Zeit verständlich zu machen. Darüber hinaus wird gezeigt, wie Martinet und Weinreich das zweisprachige Gehirn nach dem Vorbild von zwei Nationen in einem einzigen Staat begreifen.

Author's address

John E. Joseph
University of Edinburgh
School of Philosophy, Psychology & Language Sciences
Dugald Stewart Building
Edinburgh EH8 9AD
United Kingdom
john.joseph@ed.ac.uk